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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/725,765	11/30/2000	Toshiaki Okabe	108001	1657

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EXAMINER

SINGH, RACHNA

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2176

DATE MAILED: 07/14/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<p align="center">Office Action Summary</p>	Application No. 09/725,765	Applicant(s) OKABE ET AL.	
	Examiner Rachna Singh	Art Unit 2176	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 25 April 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-14 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-14 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

1. This action is responsive to communications: A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 03/29/06 and 04/25/06 has been entered.
2. Claims 1-14 are pending. Claims 1, 8, 9, 13, and 14 are independent claims.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 1-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Egendorf et al., US 2003/0177111 A1, 9/18/03 (filed 1/21/03 (continuation of app filed 11/16/99) in view of Yanaka et al., US 5,946,689, 8/31/99 (filed 11/26/97), and further in view of Bengston, US 6,728,947 B1, 04/27/04 (filed 06/05/98).

In reference to claims 1, 8, and 13, Egendorf teaches a method for searching from a plurality of data sources. Egendorf's system comprises the following:

-A method for searching for information in a plurality of information sources connected to a network and specifically to searching databases on the Internet. See page 1, paragraph [0001]. Compare to ***"a document integrated management apparatus. . .plural documents stored in plural databases managed by controllers unique to the databases, respectively, comprising:"***

-A set of mechanisms that stores information that relates terms to searchbase categories. These linkages and rules, related sets of searchbase nodes, thereby creating a concept dictionary. A searchbase contains relationships between categories and information sources. See page 5, paragraph [0059]. Thus the mechanism manages linkage information among documents in plural databases. See page 6, paragraph [0075]. Egendorf teaches the concept of a searchbase that contains relationships between categories and information sources and the associated descriptive packets. The descriptive packets describe an information source that purports to contain information relevant to the category of that node. The descriptive packets include an identification of the information source and content information. See page 5, paragraph [0059] and pages 5-6, paragraph [0067]. Compare to ***"a linkage information management unit that stores and manages linkage information . .***

.one or more documents as documents related to each other, the linkage information including at least one identifier of a document set”.

-A mechanism for creating and storing information about the relationships between different categories and information sources. See page 6, paragraphs [0075]. These linkages and rules, which relate sets of searchbase nodes, thereby creating a concept dictionary, are created by both a central authority and by the authors of the information sources. A searchbase contains relationships between categories and information sources. See page 5, paragraph [0059]. Compare to ***“a document information management unit. . .one or more documents as documents related to each other, the documents being stored in the plural databases, the document information including at least one identifier of a document set”.***

-Providing a plurality of packets wherein each packet is associated with one of a plurality of information sources and includes an identification of the information source and content description. See page 20, claim 11, page 5, paragraph [0059], pages 5-6, paragraph [0067] and figure 2B. Compare to ***“identifiers of document sets, wherein the linkage information and the document information are linked to each other when the identifier of document set included in the linkage information corresponds with the identifier of document set included in the document information.”***

EXAMINER NOTE: Egendorf teaches the concept of a searchbase that contains relationships between categories and information sources and the associated descriptive packets. The descriptive packets describe an information source that purports to contain information relevant to the category of that node. The descriptive packets include an identification of the information source and content information. See page 5, paragraph [0059] and pages 5-6, paragraph [0067]. Furthermore, the searchbase can comprise a plurality of descriptive packets, wherein each packet is associated with one of a plurality of information sources. Thus the linkage information and document information are linked to each other using identifiers. The claimed "identifier of the document sets" are taught by Egendorf by his searchbase comprising packets that identify linkage information and document information in that the packets contain information sources that have information relevant to the category of the node. Thus the "packets" serve the same purpose of the claimed invention's identifiers in that the packets do serve as an identifier of information sources related to a given document set or "searchbase".

Egendorf does not disclose or suggest document information includes a history identifier identifying an original and update or revision of a document or document set or the linkage information includes links to an updated or revised document or document set based on the history identifier; however, Yanaka discloses a method of detecting data updates involved in the replication of database data. Yanaka discloses that when data is updated, an update serial number is produced for the data. The update serial number includes a system identifier for identifying a database system in which the data is updated and is stored in the update serial number history associated with the data each time the data is updated. The update serial number history corresponds to the received data in the database and is used as an identifier for acquiring reference related data. See abstract and columns 2-6. Yanaka further discloses comparing the content

of the update serial number history with the received data and determining if the received data differs from the data in the database. In comparing the content of the update serial number history with the received data to determine if the received data differs from the data in the database, Yanaka is determining whether the update or revised document has been approved or not since the comparing entails determining if there is data in the revised document that has not been implemented into the current document. The updated data identifier points to the updated data each time the data is updated to form a new data identifier. Compare to ***"wherein the document information includes a history identifier identifying an original and update or revision of a document or document set"*** and ***"and the linkage information includes links to the original and the updated or revised document or document set based on the history identifier"***

It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate Yanaka's history identifier in the system of Egendorf as it was desirable at the time of the invention to display any updates of data in one database to another so as to ensure that the latest contents were provided to all databases. See column 1, lines 1-60 of Yanaka. Furthermore, providing a history identifier of the document would ensure the document set was up to date and contained the most recent revisions of documents as opposed to an outdated document. See column 1 of Yanaka.

Neither Egendorf nor Yanaka teach that the documents support one or more of a plurality of process nor do they teach a status identifier identifying a process step within one of the plurality of processes.

However, Bengston teaches a workflow distributing apparatus and method that executes process steps. Bengston discloses process data files (i.e. documents) containing data to be used and/or transformed by the processes. See column 5, lines 5-18. Bengston's workflow data transferred by the processing device includes a workflow file and a process data file. The workflow file contains an indication of the sequence of process steps to be executed as well as data specifying the location of process data files and status information which meets the limitation ***documents related to each other by supporting one or more of a plurality of processes***. Further, Bengston teaches providing status information to indicate the progress of the workflow process steps which meets the limitation of ***a status identifier identifying a process step within one of the plurality of processes***. See column 5, lines 29-40.

It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine Bengston's workflow process steps specifying related process data files (i.e. documents) and providing status information indicating the progress of the sequence of process steps with Egendorf's document integrated management apparatus because it was desirable at the time of the invention to provide all documents needed for a process step in a workflow system in order to allow publishers, users,

designers, and other human operators in an organization to execute their assigned process electronically so as to reduce the costs involved in executing workflow steps manually. See column 1, lines 10-54 of Bengston. Furthermore, it was desirable at the time of the invention to provide status information in order to notify users of the progression of the sequence of process steps. See column 5, lines 29-40 of Bengston.

In reference to claim 2, Egendorf discloses a method for searching for information from a plurality of data sources. Egendorf's system teaches receiving a search request from a user to retrieve information from a plurality of information sources in accordance with the given search criteria. Egendorf further teaches searching the searchbase with the inquiry to identify any of the plurality of information sources that meet the criteria. See page 20, first column.

In reference to claims 3 and 4, Egendorf discloses a set of mechanisms that store information that relates terms to searchbase categories. These linkages and rules relate sets of searchbase nodes, thereby creating a concept dictionary. A searchbase contains relationships between categories and information sources. See page 5, paragraph [0059]. Thus the mechanism manages linkage information among documents in plural databases. See page 6, paragraph [0075]. Egendorf further teaches providing a plurality of packets wherein each packet is associated with one of a plurality of information sources and includes an identification of the information source and content description. See page 20, claim 11. It is inherent in Egendorf's system that the process of identifying an information source using identification is used as a means

to target a database from the plurality of databases. Moreover, the identifier is used to identify the database and provide information from the source.

In reference to claim 5, Egendorf teaches a hierarchical network in which each category element of the network facilitates associations with the element to information source associations. Specifically, Egendorf discloses that the network includes cross-reference and link elements. See page 5, paragraphs [0060]-[0066]. Thus in presenting a hierarchical representation between the linkages, Egendorf teaches a system in which the target document in a search may be a leaf document or an entire set. See page 5, paragraphs [0060]-[0066].

In reference to claim 6, Egendorf teaches using a history database in which the terms are looked up to see it's usage in the past. See page 4, paragraph [0038].

In reference to claim 7, Egendorf teaches that the search request is transformed into queries for the identified information sources, wherein each query is in accordance with the query language and template in the information source. See page 8, paragraph [0101].

In reference to claim 9 and 14, Egendorf teaches a method for searching from a plurality of data sources. Egendorf's system comprises the following:

-A method for searching for information in a plurality of information sources connected to a network and specifically to searching databases on the Internet. See page 1, paragraph [0001]. A set of mechanisms that stores information that relates terms to searchbase categories. These linkages and rules, related sets of searchbase nodes, thereby creating a concept dictionary. A searchbase contains relationships between categories and information sources. See page 5, paragraph [0059]. Thus the mechanism manages linkage information among documents in plural databases. See page 6, paragraph [0075]. Providing a plurality of packets wherein each packet is associated with one of a plurality of information sources and includes an identification of the information source and content description. See page 20, claim 11 Compare to ***"selecting a document set identifier by searching for document information on document sets having one or more documents as related documents, the documents being stored in the plural databases, based on designation of document or document set or search data inputted in a common format from a client system, the document information including document set identifiers;"***

-A mechanism for creating and storing information about the relationships between different categories and information sources. See page 6, paragraphs [0075]. These linkages and rules relate sets of searchbase nodes, thereby creating a concept dictionary. A searchbase contains relationships between categories and information sources. See page 5, paragraph [0059].

Egendorf discloses a method for searching for information from a plurality of data sources. Egendorf's system teaches receiving a search request from a user to retrieve information from a plurality of information sources in accordance with the given search criteria. Egendorf further teaches searching the searchbase with the inquiry to identify any of the plurality of information sources that meet the criteria. See page 20, first column. Compare to ***"selecting an access target database. . .corresponding to the selected document set identifier, wherein the linkage information includes document set identifiers"***. Egendorf teaches the concept of a searchbase that contains relationships between categories and information sources and the associated descriptive packets. The descriptive packets describe an information source that purports to contain information relevant to the category of that node. The descriptive packets include an identification of the information source and content information. See page 5, paragraph [0059] and pages 5-6, paragraph [0067]. Furthermore, the searchbase can comprise a plurality of descriptive packets, wherein each packet is associated with one of a plurality of information sources. Thus the linkage information and document information are linked to each other using identifiers. The claimed "identifier of the document sets" are taught by Egendorf by his searchbase comprising packets that identify linkage information and document information in that the packets contain information sources that have information relevant to the category of the node. Thus the "packets" serve the same purpose of the claimed invention's identifiers in that the packets do serve as an identifier of information sources related to a given document set or "searchbase".

Egendorf does not disclose or suggest document information includes a history identifier identifying an original and update or revision of a document or document set or that the linkage information includes an updated or revised document or document set based on the history identifier.

Yanaka discloses a method of detecting data updates involved in the replication of database data. Yanaka discloses that when data is updated, an update serial number is produced for the data. The update serial number includes a system identifier for identifying a database system in which the data is updated and is stored in the update serial number history associated with the data each time the data is updated. The update serial number history corresponds to the received data in the database and is used as an identifier for acquiring reference related data. See abstract and columns 2-6. Yanaka further discloses comparing the content of the update serial number history with the received data and determining if the received data differs from the data in the database. The updated data identifier points to the updated data each time the data is updated to form a new data identifier. Compare to ***"wherein the document information includes a history identifier identifying an original and update or revision of a document or document set"*** and ***"and the linkage information includes links to the original and the updated or revised document or document set based on the history identifier"***.

It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate Yanaka's history identifier and status identifier in the system of Egendorf as it was desirable at the time of the invention to display any updates of data in one database to another so as to ensure that the latest contents were provided to all databases. See column 1, lines 1-60 of Yanaka. Furthermore, providing a history identifier and status of the document would ensure the document set is up to date and contains the most recent revisions of documents as opposed to an outdated document. See column 1 of Yanaka.

Neither Egendorf nor Yanaka teach that the documents support one or more of a plurality of process nor do they teach a status identifier identifying a process step within on of the plurality of processes.

However, Bengston teaches a workflow distributing apparatus and method that executes process steps. Bengston discloses process data files (i.e. documents) containing data to be used and/or transformed by the processes. See column 5, lines 5-18. Bengston's workflow data transferred by the processing device includes a workflow file and a process data file. The workflow file contains an indication of the sequence of process steps to be executed as well as data specifying the location of process data files and status information which meets the limitation ***documents related to each other by supporting one or more of a plurality of processes***. Further, Bengston teaches providing status information to indicate the progress of the workflow

process steps which meets the limitation of ***a status identifier identifying a process step within one of the plurality of processes***. See column 5, lines 29-40.

It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine Bengston's workflow process steps specifying related process data files (i.e. documents) and providing status information indicating the progress of the sequence of process steps with Egendorf's document integrated management apparatus because it was desirable at the time of the invention to provide all documents needed for a process step in a workflow system in order to allow publishers, users, designers, and other human operators in an organization to execute their assigned process electronically so as to reduce the costs involved in executing workflow steps manually. See column 1, lines 10-54 of Bengston. Furthermore, it was desirable at the time of the invention to provide status information in order to notify users of the progression of the sequence of process steps. See column 5, lines 29-40 of Bengston.

In reference to claim 10, Egendorf discloses a set of mechanisms that store information that relates terms to searchbase categories. These linkages and rules, relate sets of searchbase nodes, thereby creating a concept dictionary. A searchbase contains relationships between categories and information sources. See page 5, paragraph [0059]. Thus the mechanism manages linkage information among documents in plural databases. See page 6, paragraph [0075]. Egendorf further teaches providing a plurality of packets wherein each packet is associated with one of a

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plurality of information sources and includes an identification of the information source and content description. See page 20, claim 11. It is inherent in Egendorf's system that the process of identifying an information source using identification is used as a means to target a database from the plurality of databases. Moreover, the identifier is used to identify the database and provide information from the source.

In reference to claim 11, Egendorf teaches a hierarchical network in which each category element of the network facilitates associations with the element to information source associations. Specifically, Egendorf discloses that the network includes cross-reference and link elements. See column 5, paragraphs [0060]-[0066]. Thus in presenting a hierarchical representation between the linkages, Egendorf teaches a system in which the target document in a search may be a leaf document or an entire set. See column 5, paragraphs [0060]-[0066].

In reference to claim 12, Egendorf teaches that the search request is transformed into queries for the identified information sources, wherein each query is in accordance with the query language and template in the for the information source. See page 8, paragraph [0101].

Response to Arguments

5. It is noted Applicant's submission on 04/25/06 does not include any arguments accompanying Applicant's claim amendments. Applicant should submit an argument under the heading "Remarks" pointing out disagreements with the examiner's contentions. Applicant must also discuss the references applied against the claims, explaining how the claims avoid the references or distinguish from them.

Applicant's amendments filed 04/25/06 introduced new claim limitations reciting one or more documents related to each other ***by supporting one or more of a plurality of processes*** and a status identifier identifying ***a process step within one of the plurality of processes***.

Examiner agrees that neither Egendorf nor Yanaka teach that the documents support one or more of a plurality of process nor do they teach a status identifier identifying a process step within on of the plurality of processes.

However, as applied in the rejections above, Bengston teaches a workflow distributing apparatus and method that executes process steps. Bengston discloses process data files (i.e. documents) containing data to be used and/or transformed by the processes. See column 5, lines 5-18. Bengston's workflow data transferred by the processing device includes a workflow file and a process data file. The workflow file

contains an indication of the sequence of process steps to be executed as well as data specifying the location of process data files and status information which meets the limitation ***documents related to each other by supporting one or more of a plurality of processes***. Further, Bengston teaches providing status information to indicate the progress of the workflow process steps which meets the limitation of ***a status identifier identifying a process step within one of the plurality of processes***. See column 5, lines 29-40.

It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine Bengston's workflow process steps specifying related process data files (i.e. documents) and providing status information indicating the progress of the sequence of process steps with Egendorf's document integrated management apparatus because it was desirable at the time of the invention to provide documents in a workflow system to allow publishers, users, designers, and other human operators in an organization to execute their assigned process electronically so as to reduce the costs involved in executing workflow steps manually. See column 1, lines 10-54 of Bengston. Furthermore, it was desirable at the time of the invention to provide a status information in order to notify users of the progression of the sequence of process steps. See column 5, lines 29-40 of Bengston.

In view of comments above, the rejection is maintained.

Conclusion

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Rachna Singh whose telephone number is 571-272-4099. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (8:30AM-6:00PM). If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Heather Herndon can be reached on 571-272-4090.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

RS
07/07/06

William L Bashore
WILLIAM BASHORE
PRIMARY EXAMINER